22 /388/ Natural conditions have an overwhelming effect in shaping and determining the form of the material culture of the Yamana. This is equally true of the neighboring Selk'nam /Ona/ (Vol. I, 192). Since the indispensable conditions for gardening and farming, as well as for animal husbandry, are lacking, they can only be simple gatherers or hunters with a nomadic way of life. They practice the nomadism of a people at home on the water and along the shore. Less than fishermen, more than hunters or gatherers, they are engaged in obtaining food and are, therefore, appropriately referred to as "water nomads." Almost all day long they travel in their canoes along the intricate water channels or hunt on the shore. When they are not doing that, they squat in the hut, which is always erected on the shore near the water line. Only occasionally and for special purposes do they leave the shore and push inland to the center of the island. The surface of the water and the narrow strip of coast are the field of action and the sphere of life for the Yamana. Whatever they encounter here in the form of plants and animals determines their economic activity and is indispensable for their standard of living. The large sea mammals, the indigenous species of seals and whales, play the most important role. Sea otters and sea birds are no less important. Finally, from among the lower animals, nothing could rival the mussels and large crabs. Hunting and gathering these things constitute the chief part of the economic activity of the Yamana. [sic] The vegetable kingdom offers practically nothing, hence our natives rely exclusively on a meat diet.

§22 The vegetable kingdom and the products of the hunt furnish the raw materials for their property in goods. As a matter of principle, these possessions are of such a nature that they not only do not impede unrestricted wandering, but assure the acquisition of everything needed for subsistence and, above all, facilitate hunting and gathering. All their property is limited to what is absolutely essential. As such, this is so little that a demanding, civilized human being marvels at such perfected self-sufficiency. This is a result of the fact that every item beyond the limit of what is indispensable would be a burden that would become more grievously oppressive the longer one carried it around.

• 353 Preparedness for uninterrupted movement precludes fixed dwellings from the outset, either in the form of individual establishments or community settlements. A loose, crudely constructed hut served as shelter for a night or for a few days.

A. The Dwelling

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387. The dwelling arrangements form a considerable part of the material culture of the Yamana people and are in perfect accord with their roving, hunting life. The dwelling need offer only transitory shelter, for a single night or for a few days. If, for good reasons, it is advisable to remain longer at the same place, the ordinary light, loose construction is made a little more solid, but ordinarily a weak frame suffices. According to the size, there are two types of huts: the dome-shaped and the cone-shaped (1). Generally it is /388/

1. According to Despard (b) :660, the huts vary with the season. There are "two kinds -- the ashallee, or summer house; and the ucce, or winter house" /cited in English/. The former is supposed to be built with a few poles; "the ucce is more carefully prepared and much larger" /cited in English/. This assertion is inaccurate, for the huts have the same form in summer as in winter. Later Bridges (VP: III, 118; 1869) also distinguished "the winter wigwam" from a "summer wigwam" /cited in English/.

[X] inhabited by a single family (2). A permanent assemblage of many

2. Lovisato (b) :121 distinguishes three forms of huts, according to use and purpose. Apparently he misinterpreted native words and took this division from a long description by Bridges (VP: III, 118; 1869).

families, such as a village settlement, would be totally unusable. All this likewise contributes to the unequivocal characterization of the Yamana dwelling as extremely humble.

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342 571 The inmates do not bestow noticeable effort or care on their paltry hut, either in building it or while they are living in it, for it serves but a few hours or days for their most urgent requirements for protection against the inclemency of the weather. One must by no means believe that the Indian strives for coziness or agreeable comfort in his hut. No, it serves merely as a meager cover and at the same time to keep the indispensable fire going. Beyond that, the things that Europeans consider necessary in a dwelling would only mean needless expenditure of energy and an unnecessary burden to the Yamana, for he must constantly carry all his belongings along with him. Indeed, he dare not part with them.

1. The Lack of Permanent Settlements

361 Since there is no other way for the natives of Cape Horn to obtain food except by hunting and gathering, all members of the tribe are divided up into individual families, and as such they go forth to hunt for food. Only occasionally a few band together. This manner of obtaining food prohibits a village settlement with many people.

484 571 361 Obtaining food is the chief concern of the man. Distant and sometimes futile journeys are necessary before he approaches rocks on which seals are lying, or reaches cliffs in which cormorants nest, or finds mussel banks where gathering is worthwhile. He always sees himself at the mercy of the arbitrary, eternally restless waves and the constant shifting of winds. Despite the best intentions, despite the greatest exertion and extreme hardship, he cannot guarantee that he will attain his goal, keep on his course, and come back to the place from where his canoe trip started. The inescapable dependence on changing weather, which not infrequently hinders any kind of movement for several days, permits neither an ordered grouping of many people nor plans by the hunters to return to a permanent settlement. Anyone staying behind /369/ to wait for food that others were supposed to bring in would too often find himself exposed to starvation (3).

3. These decisive factors have been overlooked by those European critics who, misconstruing the facts, have judged our natives to be backward

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because they do not build fixed dwellings or permanent settlements.

361 Then, too, closer consideration of the game itself, upon which our Indian is after all dependent, would make the longer sojourn in compact settlements seem inadvisable. The animals change their location quite erratically. If they do favor certain places, they stay there only as long as man does not disturb them. Once they have been frightened away, it may be days before they have regained a feeling of security and settle down there again. Assuming, then, that many families wanted to live together on the same spot, this region would surely be cleared of all game within a wide radius, no matter whether it were killed or frightened away. Accordingly, the hunter would be obliged to venture ever farther from his camp in order to find his prey. Quite apart from his previous exertions, his return would be more difficult and more uncertain; those anxiously awaiting him would look for his return with greater worry. Only a short time might pass before a new camp, considerably distant from the previous one, would have to be sought.

With these brief comments, the advantages of freedom of settlement for independent individual families, in contrast to a longer residence of many people in the same place, become convincing. It is true, however, and this should be mentioned at the outset, that many families gather around a stranded whale and thus form a fortuitous settlement of limited duration. This exists, however, only as long as the supply of meat and fat holds out, for even a sea monster of such giant proportions as these largest mammals does not by any means supply unlimited quantities of food. This isolated occasion, besides one or two others of the same nature, proves how unsuitable fixed settlements would be as a permanent arrangement for our natives. It is to the advantage of all that their extensive homeland has few people, so that each individual family has a wide area open to it in all directions where its members can devote themselves undisturbed to food-gathering.

342 361 Hence, the dwelling of the Yamana, in form as well as in construction and location, is a thing of chance. A person on a journey undoubtedly aims for a definite goal at which to land if the weather is good, but sometimes he does not attain it because good booty crosses his path along the way, because he is driven off his course in the pursuit of an animal, or because wind and waves are against him. After all,

361 /369 cont./
342 he wants to steer in the direction of a food supply; where /370/ and when something falls into his hands he will stop and land. Accordingly, the landing place determines whether the family will erect only a small protective roof or a cone-shaped hut or the somewhat more elaborate construction of a dome-shaped dwelling. For the latter many long flexible green saplings and thick foliage are needed; for the second type, several short poles suffice; for the first, the few hides which everyone carries along in his canoe are adequate. Whatever external circumstances present, whatever the landing place offers, what at the moment seems most suitable, that is what the Indian chooses and decides to do. Plans far in advance would prove not only impractical for him, but usually also impossible to carry out, and therefore he does not even consider them. As though by way of compensation, however, he has a ready mental agility for making sudden resolves, and this helps him in every situation to make an instantaneous decision.

The greatest contrast to permanent settlements is the very temporary shelter which a sudden impending need teaches him to erect very quickly. Whatever the Indian happens to find, he hurriedly collects and uses to help himself as best he can. One cannot call such provisional contrivances dwellings, since they are meant only to offer cover for brief hours, for example, during a storm or rain, during sunshine, or because of an unconquerable crosscurrent. They are erected in a few minutes and are always arranged according to the local condition (4).

4. It is only with reference to this that the following words are valid: "The Fuegians have several kinds of huts; they vary their constructions according to the nature of the country they are in and according to the length of time they must stay there" /translated from French/ (La Nature: 274).

342 372 Often they crawl under an overhanging rock, into a shallow depression in a rock, or into a flat cave-shaped dip in the ground, using dense brush or coverings of pieces of leather to keep out pouring rain or a sweeping wind. Mostly they are content to use slight, effortless movements of the hands which suffice to keep the fire glowing steadily

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342 or to start a big flame. A Yamana family would scarcely ever
372 enter deeper rock declivities and actual caves, of which there are few, because they would not feel comfortable there and because the amount of smoke that would develop from the indispensable fire would drive them out again (5).

5. A few suitable rock formations and caves serve merely as cover which our Indians seek out in order to be barely sheltered for a few hours against sudden storms. In this sense Hyades (f): 558 is correct when he says: "They also settle under an overhanging rock in some easily accessible cave; for them the essential thing is to be able to build their fire" /Ed., translated from French/.

342 Actual wind screens, such as are indispensable to the northern Selk'nam (Vol. I, 197), are used as seldom as cave dwellings. /371/ It is true that for brief, forced encampments or for an urgent rest stop a simple protective roof is erected from rather large boughs covered with thick foliage, the free ends of which come together at the top, or they use a few poles and place pieces of leather on them to form a sheltering wall, or finally, they make a rude shelter of brushwood stuck in the ground as close together as possible. In all this, however, they do not follow a unified, invariable plan, but in each case choose what is possible and functional, depending on whether the sun is shining or whether they must mitigate the annoyance of bad weather, whether there is plenty of foliage at hand or nothing but a field of stone. Such a casual and transient shelter is called astéla. When the family travels on, they naturally abandon this construction without further thought to the destructive forces of nature and thus give up their right of ownership to it (6). I saw the three basic types

[423] 6. Rau (in Outes [g]:57) is the only one who holds the mistaken view that "the huts do not belong to the persons who built them, but rather are common property" /translated from

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Spanish/. Anyone who abandons his hut relinquishes the framework and, consciously or unconsciously, places it at the disposal of anyone who wishes to use it later.

mentioned here in all kinds of variations (7).

7. Hyades (q) :342 calls them "a kind of arbor of foliage" /translated from French/. Despard (b) :680 also mentions them.

2. The Two Types of Huts

In the extensive Yamana territory, from the Brecknock Peninsula to Nueva Island and down to Cape Horn, two types of huts for dwellings have developed, namely, the cone-shaped and the dome-shaped. For the time being we shall leave it an open question as to which of the two is ethnologically older here in Tierra del Fuego.

For this question a not unimportant fact is that each of the two types has its definitely limited geographical distribution: in the damp, heavily timbered west the dome-shaped hut is indigenous; in the drier, open east, the cone-shaped one. For both types environmental factors have been at least contributory, perhaps even decisive.

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The Indians gave me reasons which alone may suffice to explain the origin of both types. In the west humidity and dampness greatly predominate. The surface of the ground is much more irregular, and almost everywhere at sea level level ground with gravel or broken stones is absent. The northerly slopes of the rocks not only get the vital force of the sun, but are protected against storm and inclement weather. Thus, a thicker and more compact growth of trees develops here, and even in the smallest crevices the firm roots of the Antarctic beeches find sufficient anchorage. In the west there are few big trees, but there is a preponderance of thin, irregular, flexible trunks that shoot up quickly. They grow close to every shore /372/ and can be uprooted easily because their roots do not penetrate the rocky ground.

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In low places the wind can not exert its full force, except in a few spots, and therefore the dome-shaped hut may be used. It has

/372 cont./

•372 many advantages over the cone-shaped one. The former is more tightly constructed; hence the warmth inside is evenly distributed up to the walls, and the moist air is dried. The good cover all around prevents the annoying penetration of rain and snow. The less intense wind here in the west is kept out by the covered side walls, thus permitting the fire to glow undisturbed and the smoke to be drawn off in a straight line overhead. The Indians know how to appreciate all these advantages of the dome-shaped hut, which to a foreigner appear negligible. The flexible, long, thin, somewhat irregular and bent trunks of the beech are very suitable for the framework of this type of hut. The cone-shaped hut requires straight, uniform trunks which in the west are seldom found in the required numbers in one spot. Thus, it is the environment that favors the construction of the dome-shaped hut.

In the east, on the other hand, there are far fewer protected spots on the edge of the water. Along the north shore of Beagle Channel eastward from Ushuaia, the coast, except for isolated crannies, lies exposed to every wind and storm from the south and southwest. This is even more true of the long south coast of Navarino Island and of the three islands in the eastern outlet of Beagle Channel. If the Indians were to erect the closed dome-shaped hut on the open, broad surface of the gently sloping shore, they would have to be prepared to have their handiwork blown down by a strong gust of wind. With a cone-shaped hut one need fear this fate only in the most severe storm and tornadoes. The loosely set rows of slender trunks permit the wind to pass through and do not by any means offer the broad striking surface of the dome-shaped hut. In the east the young beech trunks [37] show uniform growth. The flat ground provides the conditions for this; they shoot up more slowly and at the same time develop breadth. They stand about within easy access. They are excellently adapted for the cone-shaped hut because the heaviness of the small trunk alone contributes to the solidity of the entire structure. Since the smoke is constantly at the mercy of the wind and gusts which stir the air even inside the hut, there must always be a convenient escape for it; the cone-shaped hut affords this much better than the other type. When there are sunny days free of rain, which in the west are less frequent than here in the east, a woman pulls the pieces of leather off the frame with a simple movement of her hand, and the interior quickly dries in the convenient cross-ventilation. Adaptation to the conditions

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342 of the weather and the landscape is easily recognized in the cone-shaped hut.

As a matter of fact, the boundary for the two types of huts /373/ coincides with the boundary between the rainier western zone and the drier eastern area. This boundary is a somewhat wavy line from Punta Divide through Angostura Murray to Nassau Gulf. Accordingly, the eastern and central Yamana had the cone-shaped hut, while the Wollaston people and those in the south and west used the other type of hut. The eastern shore of Hardy Peninsula should be regarded as a sort of transition area, since, according to travel accounts (8),

8. See below the references to Fitz-Roy, Pickering, Mission Scientifique, Dabbene, and Lothrop.

both forms were found there. The partial adoption of the cone-shaped hut may have occurred there only since the introduction of the European iron ax, but this cannot be determined today.

It is remarkable that some of the earlier seafarers definitely observed the types of construction peculiar to the east and west. In Parker Snow (a) :I, 264, we read: "Their dwellings on the eastern part of Tierra del Fuego are the conical wigwam built from branches of trees over a hollowed space of ground. On the west part their habitations I believe are somewhat different" /cited in English/ (9).

9. In Volume I he uses as a frontispiece, "Woman of Fuegia and child." The two are standing in front of their pointed conical hut which is drawn in a stylized manner and is at least twice the height of the Indian woman. On the frontispiece of Volume II, "Fuegian and his food," we also see a pointed conical hut. Both pictures were made in Banner Cove on Picton Island. Fitz-Roy:(a) in his frontispiece shows a Yapoo-Tekeenica man and in the background a family in front of their cone-shaped hut. This drawing was made in Portrait Cove in the eastern half of Beagle Channel.

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Colvocresses:38, 38 expresses himself more specifically. The hut that he saw on the northeastern shore of Nueva Island "was constructed of logs, the lower ends of which were spread round so as to form nearly a perfect circle, while the upper ends leaned against each other" /cited in English/. This refers unequivocally to the conical shape. In Orange Bay he encountered the other type of hut: "it was built of boughs, leaves, and earth; in shape it resembled a bee-hive, and was impervious to wind and snow" /cited in English/. He even accounts for the advantages of the latter type of construction as against the former. Later Hyades (f) :556 referred to both types of huts; the one he compares "to a haycock, in form and in size ... except that the hut is often more conical than a haycock" /translated from French/. Even in the first report about the Fuegians there is a brief reference to their dwellings. Decker (in Brosse-Adelung:275) says of those he observed on the southern shore of Navarino Island (probably in Bahía Windhond) that they "are made of trees, round at the bottom, and, like the tents, end almost in a point at the top where there is a small opening to let the smoke out" (10). According to the few accounts

10. His comparison, "like the tents," as well as his drawing of three huts in the picture of that landing place, leaves no room for doubt that he meant the conical hut (cf. Fig. 10, p. 55 /untranslated/).

given here, the eastern Yamana built cone-shape dwellings exclusively.

/374/ We have comments no less definite on the shape of the huts in the west. From an early time George Forster (b) :243 reports on the inhabitants of Christmas Sound: "They live under a few dried branches tied together, which constitute the skeleton of a low, round, open hut; over this is placed some brush and a few bundles of dry grass, and here and there the gaps are covered with a seal skin." A half a century later Pickering:18 describes a hut in Orange Bay as follows: "In shape it was hemispherical, having the apex unfinished for the passage of smoke: and it seemed to be the work of but a few hours with the unassisted hands" /cited in English/. Strangely enough, Fitz-Roy, a few years earlier, on April 9, 1830, came across another type of hut in the same bay: "We afterwards found that these Yapoos

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342 built their wigwams in a manner differing from that of the western tribes, [western Yamana and Halakwulup /Alacaluf/], being made of a number of poles, or pieces of wood, placed on end around a small space, and meeting at the top" /cited in English/ (King:428). Later, (a) :140, he expresses himself even more exactly: "A Tekeenika wigwam is of a conical form, made of a number of large poles, or young trees, placed touching one another in a circle, with the small ends meeting. No Fuegians, except the Tekeenika, make their huts in this manner" /cited in English/ (11). The huts of the others,

11. His error may have arisen from the fact that he carried on his observations chiefly in the western part of Cape Horn and on the western Patagonian archipelago, where we find only the dome-shaped hut.

namely, the western tribal groups, "are shaped like bee-hives" /cited in English/. Hence, the eastern shore of the Hardy Peninsula must be regarded as the region where the two forms of huts mingled. Aside from that, the west was acquainted only with the dome-shaped huts (12).

12. More recently, Lothrop (b) :128 agrees with this geographical distribution.

[177] The advance of Europeans has increasingly lessened the isolation of the individual ethnic groups from one another, and since then the peoples of the west and east have also crossed the boundary between the zones of the types of huts. During their brief visit in strange regions, however, they conveniently retained those forms to which they had been accustomed from olden times (13). Thus, the Mission

13. A certain Fell (VP:VI, 180; 1859) reports that in the Wulaia region "all the wigwams here are much inferior to those we saw at Picton Island, and so are also the people" /cited in English/. He does not make clear, however, whether he means the conical or round huts.

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342 Scientifique still found the dome-shaped huts in the neighborhood of Cape Horn, where conical ones were already appearing, whereas on the shores of the middle and eastern Beagle Channel there were only conical huts (Hyades [q]:343). Modern times have brought about a [177 412] still more radical change with the introduction of the European iron ax, since with it and other iron tools thick trunks can be felled even in the west and south, and these are suitable for the construction of a solid conical hut (14). /375/ This explains why both types of huts

14. Lothrop (b):128 very emphatically points to this circumstance: "The introduction of the ax has increased the use of the pointed house form" /cited in English/. In Figure 52 he reproduces a "modern Yahgan house" of this type of construction.

were erected side by side in a few places of the middle zone, and why in a particular place one traveler spoke about this form, another about that form (15).

15. On the islands near Cape Horn in February, 1902, Dabbene (b):178 saw the more stable, cone-shaped form of hut, which seemed strange to him. Twenty years earlier, among the Yamana of the south, the Mission Scientifique still found the dome-shaped hut.

[161] Since the west has become completely depopulated, the last Yamana are staying mostly in the central part and in the east where 342 European travelers have found only cone-shaped huts with a framework 177 of thick trunks (16). One is not mistaken if he considers this more stable

16. From the indefinite accounts of other travelers we cannot reach a safe judgment about the distribution of the two types of huts during their sojourn in that region. In Bove (e):157 (and in MM:XVIII, 189; 1884) we read: "Their huts have, in general, a cone-shaped form and two doors diametrically

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opposite each other." On his first journey he was accompanied by the botanist Spegazzini (a):163, who became acquainted with only part of a region and who saw Indian dwellings "hemispherical in form" /translated from Italian/. His other companion, Lovisato (b):133, also speaks only of a single form of hut in which "the branches of trees are set into the ground and bent over to form a dome with other branches intertwined..." /translated from Italian/. Thus, we see that even in the reports of these three men who traveled in this region simultaneously there are obvious contradictions.

conical construction a result of the iron ax introduced there. The tools of their ancestors required great effort to fell trees as thick as an arm and to cut the heavy posts required for the framework of this more stable hut. When the last Yamana, to whom the iron ax quickly became indispensable, were restricted to the middle and eastern regions, the dome-shaped hut mérana completely disappeared, so to speak, and only the cone-shaped hut, gūlĕkĕi[17], remained as a dwelling.

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If we glance at the two neighboring tribes, we find that only the dome-shaped hut appears in the region of the Halakwulup /Alacaluf/ where the weather and the landscape are the same as in the rainy western Yamana zone, whereas in the southern part of Isla Grande the Selk'nam, the neighbors of the eastern Yamana, build only the cone-shaped hut (17).

17. I have discussed the plausibility of a modification of the hut form under the influence of the European iron ax among the northern Selk'nam (Vol. I, 198).

a. The Cone-Shaped Hut

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In earlier, as well as in more recent times, the individual family built a looser or more stable construction, depending on whether

/375 cont./

342 they were planning to stay in one spot briefly or for a longer time. For the more solid construction, heavier trunks were necessary, which took more time and labor to assemble. In the last few decades every man has had an iron ax, and with this he fells trunks even as thick as an arm without particular effort. For lighter construction a few /376/ sticks suffice, and these are usually lying around campsites that are much frequented. In the building of his hut the Yamana again proves to be a person who makes himself wholly dependent on given circumstances at any particular moment. He shows his clear grasp of the state of affairs, from which he makes an instantaneous decision.

If the completely open, unprotected campsite, the inclemency of the weather, or his desire to remain for several days demands it, he aims at the outset for a more stable construction that will offer greater protection. He gathers together ten to 20 poles as thick as an arm, sometimes also thicker posts two meters high, and places them on the flat ground, inclining them toward the center. Their own weight causes them to lean firmly against one another, and they are not bound together. The interstices are filled with lumps of earth, roots and turf, and balls of dried algae and tree lichen, which are covered with leafy twigs and short pieces of bark. Larger areas are also covered with dried seal skins which must be tied together with tendons or thin, narrow leather straps because gentle air currents loosen them and they are pulled down by their own weight. Initially the ground is cleared of tossed-up algae, rotten wood, and fresh bunches of grass, and a layer of earth several centimeters deep is scraped aside. Thus the entire inner surface is a little lower than the surroundings (18).

18. Sometimes a good deal of earth was dug out of the interior of the hut. Fell entered a hut in the Wulaia region. "The so-called floor is about three feet beneath the surface of the ground, so that when the inmates enter, they have to go as if under ground" /cited in English/ (VP:VI, 180; 1859).

There is little variation in the size of this construction. Usually the number of inmates is the determining factor. The vertical

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•342 dimension up to the peak is about 1.80 meters; the diameter of the approximately circular floor plan is about 3.30 meters; the straight-line width of the entrance, measured on the floor, is 0.90; and the length of the main post and of those flanking the entrance is two meters or more (19). The entrance is closed off with a piece of leather

19. Concerning the measurements of the conical hut, Hyades (q):343 says that "they scarcely exceed two meters in height at the highest points, and their diameter at the base varies from three and a half to five meters" /translated from French/. At variance with these proportions, Hyades (f):556 mentions incredibly large measurements.

or a few sticks are placed against it (20). This hut defies even quite

20. This type of hut was described in detail by Bridges (MM:III, 118; 1869), Hyades (q):342, and Lothrop (b):128.

strong winds (21).

21. A comparison of the cone-shaped hut of the Selk'nam (Vol. I, 194) with the Yamana type of dwelling shows many points of agreement, but also significant differences.

A somewhat lighter construction of the same shape is also built. About 12 smooth, straight poles as thick as a /377/ chair leg and up to 1.90 meters long are placed upright on the ground in a circle with their free ends leaning against each other. The diameter of the groundplan scarcely ever exceeds 2.90 meters. Over this completely loose framework of straight sticks, rather large dried seal skins are spread and tied together with short, narrow straps. If the required sticks are lying about the campsite from a previous time, the dwelling is ready in a few minutes. If, however, the man has an iron ax handy, he can make it in almost as short a time. Since this structure, as such, is not very firm, it can be built only in protected spots or when there is no wind. A

/377 cont./

342 strong gust of wind makes it collapse immediately.

From the start the builder intends this hut to serve only as a transitory makeshift to shelter his family while they rest for a few hours or for a single night. Afterwards it is a matter of minutes to take down and fold the pieces of leather. The family is again ready to travel on.

The loose cone of smooth sticks is left standing. Soon a gust of wind scatters it, and a family landing at the same place later on can easily erect a protective dwelling (22). One frequently comes

22. Fitz-Roy (a):215 confirmed the fact that the sticks of a hut framework are never purposely destroyed: "The natives allow them to decay naturally, but never wilfully destroy them" /cited in English/.

across an abandoned encampment, and there are usually enough dry sticks lying around for the loose construction of a hut. Familiar places or favorable hunting areas are visited repeatedly by different families for varying periods of time.

Both of the cone-shaped huts we have just described have a single entrance which is regularly placed away from the wind (23).

23. "Branches or tree trunks often restrict the opening where one enters. This opening is, in general, on the side opposite the wind" /translated from French/ (Hyades [f]:556).

The more solid construction has a larger interior than the one which consists of loose sticks. In the latter, the surface of the ground inside is not scraped to form a depression, but instead a low ring-shaped wall, consisting of refuse from meals, is gradually formed on the outside, which makes it difficult for cold currents of air to enter. The peak of the conical framework is not covered, and the rising smoke escapes through it. The natives know how to place and distribute the pieces of skin on the outside so advantageously that a slight draft lets the smoke escape in a straight line. Rain and snow can very easily enter, but this apparently does not annoy the inmates.

487 A trodden path leads from the entrance of the hut to the place where

/377 cont./

481 water is obtained and to the canoe which has been drawn up on the beach where it remains until the journey is resumed.

/378/ B. The Dome-shaped Hut

•342 In the western and southwestern part of Yamana territory, including the Wollaston group, only the dome-shaped hut, mĕrana, mĕranĕkĕr, was known. In contrast to the cone-shaped hut, it shows adaptation to the nature of the region.

A somewhat flattened hemispherical form predominates. For a larger number of occupants it is stretched lengthwise, so that the groundplan is a drawn-out oval. The poles used for the framework determine this form of the hut. The slender and flexible, thin,
[157] long trunks of young beeches are chosen. It is well known that these trees do not grow well in the shade of the forest and shoot up quickly, developing a short root system that lies entirely on the surface. They can be pulled up without effort, and with only the slightest exertion the sparse tangled roots and the scanty crown of leaves can be broken off. The result is an almost smooth pole that is as flexible as a twig and that hardly varies in thickness along its entire length.

The framework made from such poles, if it is to have the desired stability, necessarily is a kind of basketwork. First a few larger poles are driven into the ground at wide intervals on the line indicating the groundplan. These include the two poles that are to flank the entrance. The natives try to achieve the dome shape from the beginning by bending and intertwining the poles, without regard to the direction or position of the poles relative to each other or to the points where they will later be fastened together. This initial framework is gradually filled out and reinforced with additional, supplementary poles that are inserted between the first ones. Most of them are so long that they reach far beyond the height of the dome down to the opposite side (24). This gives the framework as a

24. According to an often repeated, but incorrect account, the individual poles are said to meet at the top. Hyades (q) :342 also speaks inaccurately of "branches stuck in the ground and coming

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•342 together at the top" /translated from French/.

whole an advantageous elastic tension. In the places where the individual poles cross, they are held together by a single loop made [37] with the stems of Marsippospermum rushes and young shoots of Nothofagus or Maytenus. These are sufficiently tough, and they are as flexible as thick packing cord. This framework might be compared with a coarsely and untidily plaited basket.

On the outside, about halfway up the framework, lumps of earth, balls of moss, and pieces of turf are built up all around, like masonry, and this keeps out the wind. Rather large, leafy twigs are placed on the upper half and adequately fastened by being pushed under and lapped over. Thick bunches of grass are also spread out all the way around, and lumps of earth are placed over these intervals to make a firm layer. Not /379/ uncommonly large pieces of leather are stretched over all of this and tied securely at the edges. Their weight strengthens the loose cohesion of the structure (25).

25. The leather covering stretched over the framework is not a single piece. It would be, as Lothrop (b) :128 admits, "a heavy and cumbersome object to handle" /cited in English/. Large, individual skins prove to be more manageable. They are placed side by side in such a way that their edges overlap. One cannot compare these with the large hut covering used by the Selk'nam (Vol. I, 195), which is a single piece made of many individual guanaco skins, thoroughly scraped on both sides. They are, to begin with, considerably lighter and incomparably more flexible than the thick, heavy seal skins.

Neither brushwood nor pieces of leather are placed on the peak; hence, the smoke of the hut fire has a free outlet. At the same time, there is no danger of the hut itself catching fire.

With this type of design, the groundplan can be extended to any length if two to four families build a common dwelling or

/378 cont./

342 if many persons erect the čiéxaus hut. Likewise, the covering and layers of earth, brushwood, or pieces of leather can be increased to obtain greater protection against strong winds, increasing cold, and heavy rain. Whatever the length of such a hut, the peak of the dome is never higher than 1.90 meters. In general the height of a single-family hut is around 1.75 meters; the width fluctuates between 2.60 meters and 3.30 meters. The low entrance permits only one person at a time to slide through sideways. When the hut is unusually elongated, an entrance is made on each of the two narrow sides; for a one-family hut, of course, the single entrance suffices (26).

26. The form and characteristics of Yamana dwellings have been more or less extensively described by Bove (c) :127 and (e) :157, Dabbene (b) :178, Despard (b) :680, Hyades (q) :343, L'Hermite:42, Lothrop (b) :127, Spegazzini (a) :170, and others. Cooper:193 has brought together the more important accounts.

3. The Hut as a Dwelling

342 571 Neither the conical nor the dome-shaped hut affords the Fuegian occupants complete comfort and convenience. It is far more a protection against the worst hardships of the weather and against the terrors of the night. A European acting as unprejudiced observer can best feel what discomfort and annoyance are connected with living in those cramped, poor dwellings (27). In the opinion

27. We must agree fully with the opinion of Lovisato (b) :133: "How very little protection this pretense of a dwelling offers the people, who in general are completely nude, resistant to all kinds of privation, and engaged in a continuous struggle to procure the necessities for their daily sustenance" /translated from Italian/.

/379 cont./

of the natives, however, this hardship does not by any means compare with the unbearable misery that would result from a sojourn under the open sky. Thus, whenever external circumstances demand it, the natives build their hut, even during the severest /380/ storm, making it either more secure and durable as a dome-shaped dwelling or merely providing a light covering with the conical shape.

A family does not always have a choice of location. A sudden change in the weather or an accident will force them to make for shore without delay. In this case they must adjust themselves to the conditions provided by nature, perhaps even make do with a hasty shelter in a cliff. If they are not under pressure, they make a free selection according to the local weather conditions and the characteristics of the landscape (28). In general, however, everyone

28. When the Indian has a choice, he selects a sheltered spot for his hut. This is so generally true that Bove (MM:XVII, 234; 1883) believed he could go by it: "Generally the presence of wigwams indicates a locality sheltered from the coldest and the most frequent winds" /cited in English/.

stays on the dry gravel as close as possible to the highest water level. Their own comfort makes this strongly advisable, for all the utensils that a family carries along with them are dragged from the canoe to the hut. Packing and unpacking would be considerably more burdensome if the dwelling were far from the landing place. If they cannot build a hut for themselves, they seek cover and protection behind mounds of earth and low projecting rocks, at the foot of high rock walls, and at the edge of a forest. A hut is never placed deep in the forest because it is too damp there, but they like to stay under the broadest trees, which ward off rain and snowdrifts. If they are planning to remain only one night at a given location, they take a look at the weather to see if it will permit them to camp in a less protected spot. If not, or if they do not expect to travel on for a few days, a certain amount of caution is advisable. This explains why one finds just as many old campsites along the open, unprotected coast as in sheltered places farther back. An obvious preference is

/361 cont./

352 The interior arrangement is the same in either a dome-shaped hut or a conical hut. Actually, to be exact, there is no arrangement, since furniture and household furnishings are entirely absent. There are neither stools nor benches. The interior wall is neither covered nor decorated. Small baskets and leather pouches, pieces of meat, and fungi are hung on short pegs made of broken-off twigs. Tools and implements, ornaments, and other trifles are shoved between the poles of the framework. There is no floor

• 362 built as such, but while construction is going on the ground is stamped down. The natives like to dig out the entire interior surface, sometimes as much as 50 centimeters deep, and this shallow depression is a good protection against wind and cold air from outside. A preferred campsite is the dry, loose gravel that does not have to be leveled off, but is cleared of dirt, algae, and wet leaves. If the subsoil happens to be very wet or puddles are formed in persistent rain, pieces of bark are strewn about so that one does

364 not have to sit in the water. Sometimes, if too much water comes in, a layer of gravel has to be built up under the place for the fire, and the fire itself laid higher.

In the ordinary dwellings the fire is in the center, and the occupants squat around it in a circle. They are careful to maintain a broad, even glow which gives off little smoke but sends out abundant heat. The hours when heavy storms whirl the smoke around inside the hut are extremely distressing. In such cases the entrance is blocked with tree trunks or covered with a leather curtain. At night the natives regularly use something to close off the entrance securely. During the day and in good weather they let the air freely enter the hut. They move close to the entrance or they even squat out of doors beside the hut and keep a second fire going outside. In spite of a good covering, the loose construction does not prevent rain and snow /365/ from entering (31).

31. "Air circulates freely through the numerous interstices between the uprights of the hut. Rain, snow, or hail follows the same path, and the Fuegians are little disturbed by it" /translated from French/ (Hyades [G ..887).

357

/[illegible] cont./
in this respect: "Thanks to the constant ventilation of the hut, the air in it remains pure in spite of the number of its occupants" /translated from French/.

cover and drag a few leather pieces out into the open -- proof that these people feel the need of an airing -- but this does not help much either (40).

40. Hyades (4) :344 says: "Some filth accumulates in the hut; the urine of the little children penetrates the ground, which is also impregnated with the refuse from eating, although the natives are in the habit of throwing outside the remains of what they have eaten, such as shells, the bones of fish and birds, etc." /translated from French/.

357
• 342 A family finally remedies the situation by building a new hut a short distance away. If it is advisable to remain at the same place for a longer period of time because of an abundant supply of meat, for example, a stranded whale. Even though the site for the new hut is less advantageous -- because the ground is very wet or because mares can more easily beat down on it -- nevertheless, the occupants find it intolerable to remain longer at the previous site. /[illegible]/ "The sole reason is that the first hut is no longer as healthy as it was when they first lived in it" /translated from French/, so they say (Hyades [4] :344).

A change of dwelling is often necessary after about two weeks. Usually the Indians build an entirely new structure, but sometimes they use the frame poles of the previous one if these are hard to secure in any other way (41). The abandoned hut

41. Hyades (7) :318 observed, for example, that the Indians "tore down their dwelling in order to use the same material to build others not very far away" /translated from French/.

/366 cont./

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meanwhile aire out thoroughly, is completely cleansed by the rain, and after considerable time is again suitable as a temporary refuge. With this in mind they leave the first dwelling undamaged when they move out, and upon their return they need make only a few additions. Again, unreasoning nature helps where these Indians themselves are lacking in cleanliness. Even though the dwelling may be changed, certain circumstances may make it imperative to remain for a longer period in one place. When such circumstances are absent, every family unhesitatingly and at frequent intervals moves in campsite a great distance.

362 Each individual family erects a dwelling exclusively for itself wherever it temporarily happens to be. Formerly, however, in the west an exception was made where a hut known as ayamakh was built to be occupied by several families. The reason for this [361] was either the prophetic warning of a few yékamuh who predicted a severe winter or the stranding of a whale at the beginning of the cold season. Three to six families who were related or friends joined in the building of this community hut. They chose a suitable spot near the stranded whale or near the swamp where they [363] preserved large pieces of fat in the water, in any case on dry ground and particularly well protected from wind and weather by a high rock. The men taking part in the construction of the dwelling, the customary dome-shaped hut, but elongated in this case, fetched suitable poles and built a stable, unusually strong framework.

They devoted great care to this work, which therefore occupied them all for perhaps half a day, whereas the ordinary dome-shaped hut took only two to three hours and the conical hut even less time. The length and width of this communal dwelling depended on the number of occupants, and the height of the interior was increased somewhat to prevent any discomfort that might be caused from the smoke of the larger fire. An unusually thick cover was laid on the firm framework, consisting of several alternate layers of tree bark and grass, rushes and twigs, with large, thick pieces of leather occasionally inserted between them. Thongs were stretched over large areas in order to /367/ secure the outer cover firmly. An entrance was left on each of the two narrow ends, and this was covered with a leather hanging. Both entrances were

/387 cont./

342 used except when the wind was too strong, in which case only one or the other was temporarily left open.

Inside the dwelling each family chose its particular place which it retained without any special boundary lines (42).

> 42. There were such boundaries in very isolated cases, however. Hyades (f) :556 says: "Twice at Orange Bay we saw huts with two or three interior compartments, niches made by vertical tree trunks. . . These niches served as quarters for the night for three or four persons" /translated from French/.

Members of the same family preferred to gather together on one side of the fire. Usually a single continuous fire extending the [373] entire length of the hut was kept going. In exceptional cases, however, when members of an individual family chose their places on either side of the middle line, each family made its own fire, so that one could tell how many families there were from the number of separate fires. One could sometimes observe the same thing in the ordinary dome-shaped hut if, for some reason, two or three families were occupying it together for a few days (43).

> 43. Bridges (MM:XII, 11; 1878) once wrote: "There were three men, five women, and seven children in this wigwam, and three fires lit in different parts" /cited in English/.

573 The wide areas on either side of the center line where the fire was burning were the sleeping places, where the Indians squatted or lay stretched out during the day. Bunches of the long [Bulj] stems of Poa flabellata grass with its narrow leaves were preferred for a pallet. This served very well and became musty only after considerable time. It was then removed and replaced by a fresh layer. The lower part of the outside covering of the hut was 372 made tight to keep off the wind and to make the fire burn evenly. 342 Otherwise the smoke would be blown about, since the few

/387 cont./

372 342 openings in the top prevented it from escaping easily. The entire structure was well insulated, for it was meant to offer special protection against the rigors of the climate. Since it was built in the damp western part where dry firewood was not available in large quantities, the Indians managed by constantly carrying green wood into the hut and piling it up. In a few days it was dry and only then was used for burning. Even a supply of tussock grass [513] (Poa flabellata) was kept on hand, for this litter for the bed had to be renewed at least every two weeks.

251 The men supplied the necessary food for their families on communal hunting expeditions which were usually so successful that a good share of the booty could be stored away for a few days. This helped in periods when the hunt was seriously hindered by continuous stormy weather. They were anxiously concerned about having an abundant supply of meat always on hand, if not perhaps a whale /388/ lying on the shore. Otherwise the gathering of many people in the same place in a securely built hut would not only be pointless, but even dangerous. Inevitably the inhabitants frightened the game farther and farther away from the dwelling, which made hunting increasingly difficult. Then only ample stores kept off the threatening specter of hunger.

342 362 221 A hut for several families was occupied only in winter. Wanderlust was too strong to detain a family in one spot any length of time for other reasons. The people who built a communal hut would perhaps come back to it for a second winter, but not after that, for the game supply had been exhausted over a wide area, and they themselves were kept away by the boredom of sitting still. The arrangement described here might be referred to as the "winter hut." Near it a sort of winter supply was piled up. The very safe shelter provided somewhat comfortable living [517] conditions, and during the long periods of inactivity together, favorite myths and legends were repeated, or the people told each other stories of their own experiences and Hánnus stories. Communal huts were not built in the east, and the reason is simple: weather and hunting conditions were much more favorable there.

342 593 After a few families have settled in the so-called multiple-family hut, they not infrequently erect another building directly beside it for the half-grown children, and this is appropriately known as the "children's hut." It resembles the first hut in shape

/388 cont./

342 and finish, but is smaller. This separate hut for the children is
593 usually built because of lack of space in the large hut, and it is
855 always regarded as a necessary expedient, for parents do not like to be separated from their children unless it is absolutely necessary. Although the children stay by themselves several hours of the day and all night, they nevertheless like to be with their family a great deal, and they always have access to the large hut. An older woman takes charge of the small company and sometimes brings them a little food, but more often the children get their food from their own parents.

In exceptional cases, for instance, the illness of an older person, imminent confinement of the mother, and so forth, even the single family builds a separate hut for the children beside the one for the adults, much as they dislike to do so. This children's hut is an expedient, and the parents by no means decide on it because they do not wish to be disturbed by crying and noise, for Indian children as such are gentle and quiet.

342 Finally, if several families camp a few days in the same
857 spot, the children as a game build a little hut with their own hands beside the dwellings of their parents. After all, they must occasionally give vent to their energies. The understanding parents willingly support them in this, sometimes bringing the children meat and approvingly watching the happy gathering. This children's hut is called ëkëli. /389/ It is obvious and understandable that it cannot be an actual dwelling, but serves merely for the enjoyment and playful occupation of the little band (44).

44. This unequivocal appraisal of the so-called children's hut is absent in what Hyades (q):342 and Bridges (a) :183 write about it. The latter is more ambiguous than the former.

342 If one stands in front of an Indian hut as a European judge,
511 no matter which type of hut it is, one involuntarily asks himself: What protection does this poor makeshift afford? By nature our natives are extremely undemanding. If one would like definite proof of this, he need only observe them in their dwelling. If they have a little protection from the heaviest rainfall and the densest snowstorm, against the bitterest cold and the most

/389 cont./

342 611 devastating storm, they are content and uncomplaining, provided they are squatting beside their fire, to which they give all their attention. That is why they put something in front of the first entrance and open another one if the wind changes direction. To prevent the wind from coming through the walls, they pull larger pieces of leather over them, now here, now there, stuff up open places, and secure loose parts. If a big blast of wind tears down the whole hut, the people patiently await the end of the storm without any kind of cover, protected only a little by their meager clothing, provided their fire goes on after a fashion. The European has the impression, especially after having seen the living arrangements of the Selk'nam (Vol. I, 198) that the Yamana regards his hut more as a protection for his fire than for his own body.

The dwelling itself is neither cozy nor comfortable. As regards the desire of the members of the family to be peacefully together, they are, in any case, with each other on the trips in the open canoe. That is why they do not miss the hut during the day if the weather is reasonably quiet, and for the night they are content with the meagerness of their simple little hut (45). Their

45. The discomfort of the meager living arrangements was clearly described by Spegazzini (a) :171 from his own experience.

restless, wandering life forces them to renounce the amenities of more stable, secure housing (46).

46. Bove (c) :127 expresses himself in a similar fashion: "The poverty of their huts must be attributed to the nomadic life they are forced to lead" /translated from Spanish/.

342 Today throughout Yamana territory we find only one form of hut, namely, the loose cone-shaped type. It is only for the secret initiation ceremonies that the elongated dome-shaped hut is built. Their contemporary hut does not even afford the protection

/389 cont./

342 of the former dwellings, which was scarcely worth mentioning, since at present the Indians do not take the trouble to dry a few seal skins and stretch them over the framework. Instead they procure /390/ light sacking which lets in rain and snow and hardly keeps off some of the wind (47). Complete laxness and dilatory

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47. Lothrop (b) :128 gives a similar judgment: "Thus housed they have had immeasurably poorer protection from the weather than in the days when hunger drove them to secure many seals and consequently many seal-skins were available for housetops" /cited in English/.

indolence have so completely alienated the last survivors of the race from the industry of their fathers that even the most distressing inclemency of the weather no longer stirs them from their state of lazy immobility. A few families have built small, very simple wooden houses, European style, in Puerto Mejillones (48),

[177]

48. They obtain the raw materials for these houses through their work as day laborers or as gifts (p. 357 /untranslated/). According to Lothrop (b) :129, "the material for their construction was begged, stolen, or picked up on the beach" /cited in English/.

but they spend only a small part of the year in them. They, too, travel about for weeks in their canoe looking for food, and meanwhile content themselves with a cover of sacking on the cone-shaped framework of their flimsy hut.

4. The Community Camp

361 The Yamana do not have permanent settlements in one place. There are a few occasions, however, when many families come together and remain in one place for a longer period of time. If a whale is stranded, people come from a great distance, and the

/424/ 2. Cleanliness in the Hut

342 With few and rare exceptions, the hut serves chiefly as scanty protection for a night or for a few days against inclemencies of the weather. Often it is erected by people who have barely escaped a storm, who in all haste were obliged to collect their few possessions from the canoe and, wet and shivering with cold, seek shelter under an inadequate cover. The first concern of everyone is to light the fire and keep it going in order to warm himself thoroughly; later, in his weariness, he begins to think of satisfying his hunger and seeking rest.

356 Everything that the Indian family has taken along in their canoe is tossed under the hut covering in disorder. There it remains, wet, crumpled, and topsy-turvey. If anyone needs some item, the whole jumble is pulled out, which only increases the confusion. They do not know how to take care of their belongings. No one dreams of putting them in order, folding them, drying or cleaning them, hanging them up, or putting them in a neat pile. If they are looking for some particular thing, they rummage carelessly through the hodgepodge of trifles in the little baskets. Larger objects that are piled in a heap in the hut are dragged hither and yon with no regard for the damage that might be done to them. The European observer has the impression that these Indians place no value whatever on their utensils and that they have completely forgotten the effort it took to make them. Actually, no one clings to his few goods and chattels which, as it is, are often and easily lost, but just as easily replaced. The chief and practically the sole concern of everyone everywhere is to preserve his own life, to have a little protection against exposure to the elements, and to appease his hunger. In the face of this, protective care of material possessions is pushed far into the background. The Indian does not even exercise care when he could very conveniently do so.

A European is likely to shake his head at the boundless indifference of these people who drag brand-new objects, precious clothing, fresh provisions, and valuable items through thick mud, or abandon them to their swift destruction by children and dogs. One will never succeed in lifting these Indians out of their state

/677 cont./

γ. Collaboration of the Spouses

462 The activities and spheres of work of the man and wife are distinctly separate from one another. In their daily work both spouses strive for the material welfare of their family. This single aim /678/ is the reason why the two supplement each other harmoniously and beneficially. The identical direction of their efforts is shown even more in certain joint activities in which each lends a hand. In such cases, one alone may lack the necessary strength or their common effort may accomplish the work more quickly. This is true of hut-building; the man brings
● [342] the thicker trunks while she ties the framework together, stretches pieces of leather over it, and finally calks the whole construction. Usually the hut is built after a strenuous canoe trip on which man and wife have overtaxed themselves more or less, or at any rate enough. Hence the sooner they can move into the modest structure, the more advantageous it will be for the whole family. That is why they both work at it from the very beginning to the final touch. In order to moor the boat on the shore both of them must join forces, and again when it is once more pushed into the water. Together they lift the large pieces of leather, which are to be distributed over the hut framework, out of the canoe and put them back in again shortly before departure. Not infrequently the success of the hunt depends upon the accurately timed cooperation of both partners in the canoe, for as soon as the man starts pursuing a game animal, he is fully occupied with his weapons and his prey. It is the woman's responsibility to guide her vessel according to her husband's directions, to take it on this or that course faster or slower until the animal they have been pursuing is theirs. This sometimes requires the utmost exertion on the part of the man as well as the woman. In moments of greatest emergency she may even shout to him to take the paddle, for if a sudden violent storm breaks, she is unable to make shore paddling alone.

It is true that man and wife have their definitely circumscribed fields of activity. Nevertheless, if danger and distress, sickness, or incapacity demand it on occasion, neither of them

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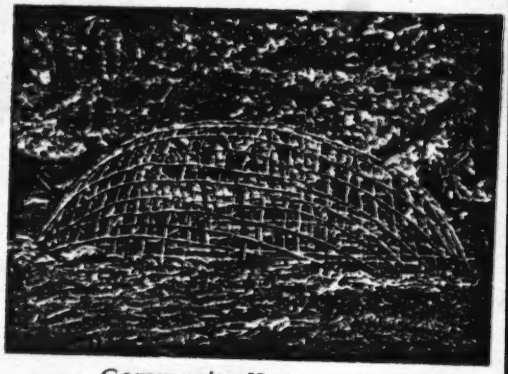
Single Hut



Community Hut

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Waiyandella Game

Haiyekasanaskwa Game

[291]

Former Clothing

Vulture Game

Albatross Game

2: Cooper E-4 (no date) 1946 SH6 Yahgan SH6

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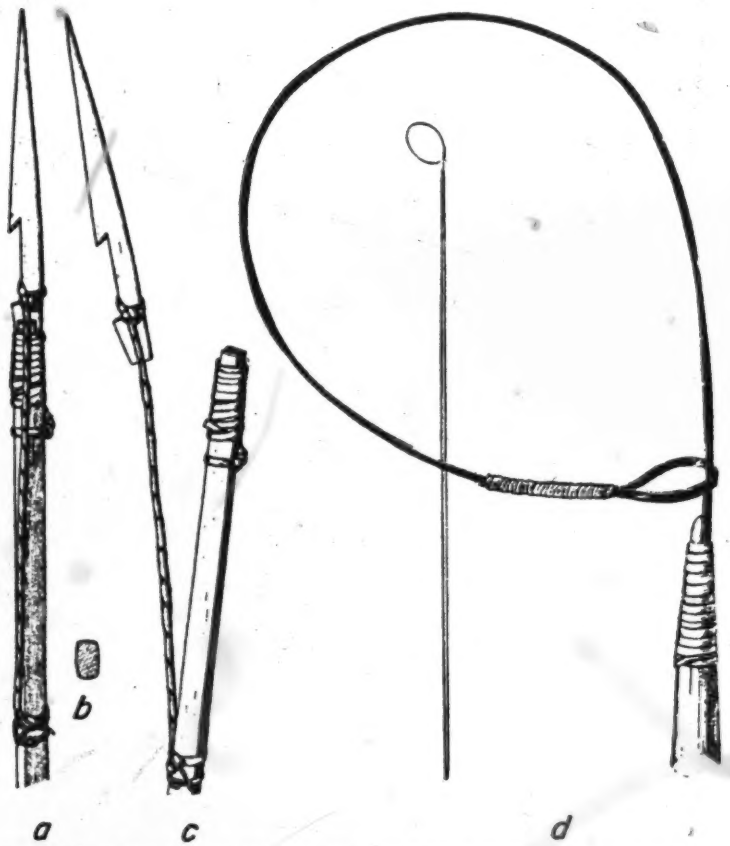

FIGURE 11.—*Yahgan* harpoon and pole snare. *a*, Harpoon assembled for casting; *b*, cross section of harpoon shaft; *c*, position when dragging through water (length of harpoon head 10 in., or 25.5 cm.); *d*, two views of bird snare (diameter of loop 6½ in., or 16.5 cm.). (After Lothrop, 1928, figs. 82, 87.)

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divisional areas. Apart from initiation and other social or religious functions, which brought larger numbers together temporarily in a common camp, each biological family or small group of two or three families tended to camp apart, more frequently in the same shelter.

342

The two chief forms of family shelter were the beehive hut and the conical hut. The beehive or domed hut, the more common form, especially in the west, was circular or elliptical in ground plan, made of a framework of flexible sticks bent over dome-shape and fastened together, and covered with grass, ferns, branches, bark, skins, or anything at hand (pl. 33, *b*). The conical hut, more fre-

2: Cooper E-4 (no date) 1946 SH6 Yahgan SH6

342 quently used toward the east, was tipi-form, with a framework of stiff stout saplings or tree trunks.

The ground in the interior of the hut was often, but not always, scooped out, to a depth of 2, 3, or more feet (0.6 to 1 m.) beneath the outside ground level, and was usually covered with a little grass or [354] some branches. The fire was made in the center. The huts had one door, facing the sea; or else two doors, one facing the sea, the other being opposite.

172 342 Archeological stratification in the *Yahgan* area of Navarino Island shows an earlier culture with shelters like those still used by the *Alacaluf*, oval in ground plan, having two entrances, and without scooped-out pits; and a later one with circular shelters having one entrance, and with pits 12 to 18 feet (4 to 6 m.) in diameter, scooped out in some cases to a depth of more than 3 feet (1 m.) (Bird, 1938, p. 261). The two historic types of *Yahgan* wigwam, oval and circular, unpitted and pitted, may thus represent two chronologically distinct cultures.

342 Larger and more substantial huts were built for initiation rites (q. v., infra); sometimes very small ones, for the use of children. The *Yahgan* also at times used caves or made a very rude shelter of a few branches tied together or stuck in the ground.

177 342 At the time of Lothrop's visit in 1924–25, practically all the then surviving *Yahgan* were accustomed to pass the winter months at Puerto Mejillones and Porto Piedra, on Navarino Island, in huts poorly constructed of ill-fitting boards (Lothrop, 1928, p. 188). Loth- [237] rop (1928, p. 131) considers the use of the wing of a large bird for [356] sweeping out the shelter to have probably been the result of missionary influence.

DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

291 **Clothing.**—The chief garment, for men and women, was a small cape, of seal, sea-otter, or fox skin, sometimes of two or more skins sewn together—occasionally of bird skins—worn with the fur outside, covering the shoulder and breast or reaching to the waist, and held in place by a string across the chest. It was commonly shifted outdoors over the windward shoulder. Very frequently it was left off entirely. The women rarely if ever went without a small triangular pubic covering of bird skin or hide, held in place by a string attached to each upper corner and encircling the waist (pl. 33, *f*). No head covering was worn. Usually the *Yahgan* went barefoot, but sometimes when traveling or hunting on land they wore rather crudely made moccasins (fig. 12), resembling closely the *Ona* ones in pattern, of sealskin, with the hair outside, and stuffed inside with grass (cf. Lothrop, 1928, p. 124, photo). The eastern *Yahgan*, when hunting guanaco in winter, sometimes wore guanaco skin leggings, like the *Ona*, from whom they

3: Lothrop E-5 (1924-1925) 1928
SH6 Yahgan SH6

THE ENCAMPMENT

291 342 Yahgan clothes were less suited to the climate than those of the Ona, because they were smaller and gave less bodily protection, and because the skins they used were less suitable for their purpose. Thus, guanaco-skin, regularly employed for Ona robes, is thin and flexible, so that it will readily conform with the contours of the body, while the hair is heavy, so that it will shed water and preserve warmth. In contrast, seal-skin and sea-otter skin of Yahgan capes has a heavy and stiff hide and short hair, and therefore

FIG. 51.—Yahgan house. (After Hyades and Deniker.)

gives less protection. As a result of this disparity, to maintain life the Yahgan had to have more shelter than that afforded by an Ona windbreak. And possessing the means of water transportation they could handle heavier equipment than their inland neighbors, though, to be sure, their bark canoes were small and frail to bear much cargo in addition to the human freight.

342 Normally the Yahgan lived in a wigwam known as *ákharh*. In the west, like the Alacaluf hut, this was usually a domed affair about the size and shape of a large haycock, framed with saplings set upright in a circle or oval and then bent inward until they met

3: Lothrop E-5 (1924-1925) 1928
SH6 Yahgan SH6

342 (fig. 51). Farther east the wigwam more frequently was pointed, for it was constructed of poles too thick to be bent. The introduction of the ax has increased the use of the pointed house form. Both kinds of houses were covered in summer with leaves, bark, kelp, grass, or whatever was handy. But during the winter months it was necessary further to break the force of the wind, and so the wigwam was overspread with a roof of seal-skins sewn together (*kaíkis*). This was a heavy and cumbersome object to handle, and hence was usually divided into two or even three sections, each of which could be transported in a separate canoe. Thus each house sheltered two or sometimes three families, usually closely related. In such a dwelling one family lived on each side, separated by a door facing the beach, a central fire, and sometimes a second door at the rear. The entrances could be closed with a flap of seal-skin.

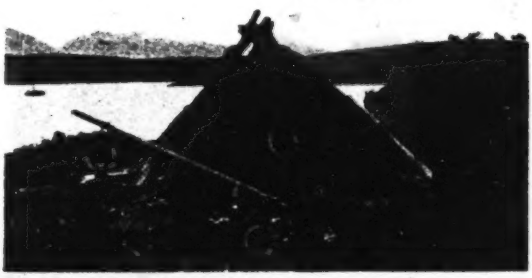

FIG. 52.—Modern Yahgan house.

In recent years the Yahgan have used in summer a log tipi covered with burlap. The small burlap-covered shelter shown in fig. 52 was occupied by eleven individuals in the summer of 1923–24. Thus housed they have had immeasurably poorer protection from the weather than in the days when hunger drove them to secure many seals and consequently many seal-skins were available for housetops.

342 354 The Yahgan kept their houses warm by building the tops low, for they appreciated the fact that heat rises. To take further advantage of this propensity they scooped out the floor to a depth of two or three feet or more. Thus the fire could be placed at the bottom of the pit while the inmates occupied a higher level, where bunks were outlined with logs held in position by stakes driven in the sloping floor. In old camp-grounds where the accumulated shell and ash gave excellent drainage, the pitted house floors reach

3: Lothrop E-5 (1924-1925) 1928
SH6 Yahgan SH6

as much as five feet below the surface. Here the housetop need scarcely have risen above the ground level, and the people within must have been snugly lodged against winter gales. But the swirling smoke was a constant annoyance, and many accounts speak of the Yahgans' red and inflamed eyes.

Initiation or ceremonial houses differed from the living houses chiefly in size. In the west they were domed and oval in outline, as shown in pl. XIV. In the east they took the form of a heavy solid tipi-shape dwelling of logs like the Ona initiation lodge (fig. 38).

Under mission influence the Yahgan in late years built small plank houses of European type. A group of these was found at Puerto Mejillones and Porto Piedra on Navarin island which were used as winter quarters (pl. XVIII). They were wind- and water-tight, and some had wooden floors, bunks, and stoves. The material for their construction was begged, stolen, or picked up on the beach.

CAMP EQUIPMENT

Yahgan camp equipment, in spite of superior transportation facilities, was just as primitive as that of the Foot Indians, among whom every article, and the infants as well, had to be carried on the back. Strong and simple as are the objects below listed, they

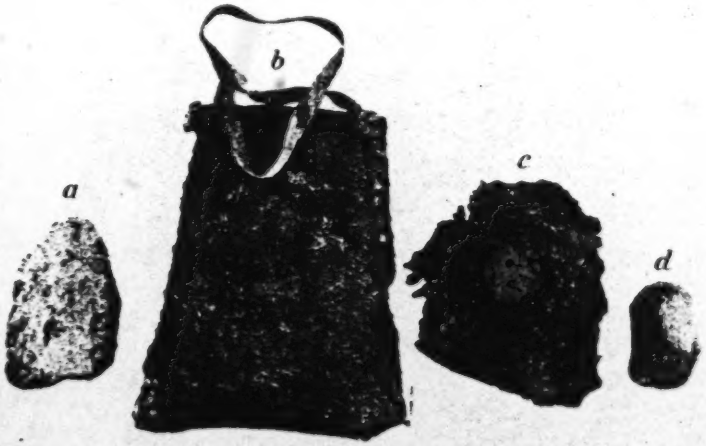

FIG. 53.—Yahgan fire-making apparatus. *a*, Flint; *b*, pouch; *c*, tinder; *d*, pyrites. Width of bag, 5 in. (14/2352)

1: Cooper E-4 (no date) 1946 SH5 Tehuelche
Yahgan SH6

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415
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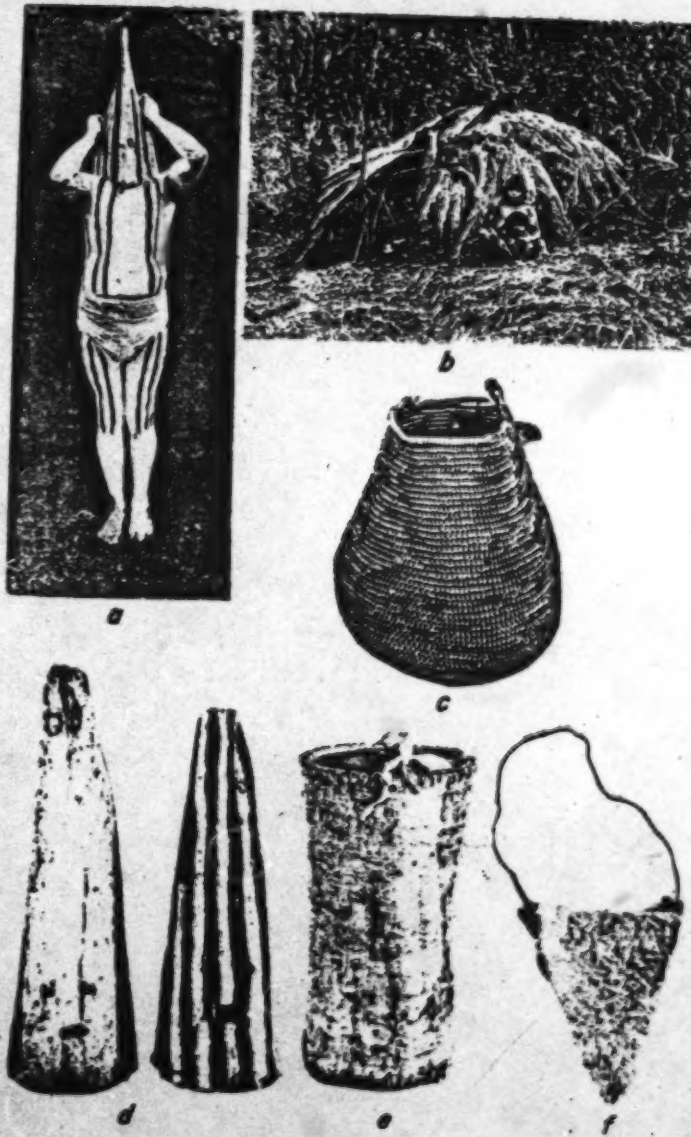

PLATE 28.—Yahgan life and manufactures. a, Masked Klan spirit (after Gusinde, 1925 a, fig. 4); b, domed hut (after Hyades and Deniker, 1891, pl. 20); c, coiled basket (courtesy Museo Etnográfico, Buenos Aires); d, bark canoes used in Klan rite, height of taller 27 in., or 68.5 cm. (after Lothrop, 1928, fig. 92); e, bark bucket, height 13½ in., or 31.7 cm. (after Lothrop, 1928, fig. 88); f, pubic covering, width 9 in., or 23 cm. (after Lothrop, 1928, fig. 44).

[p. 160 A]